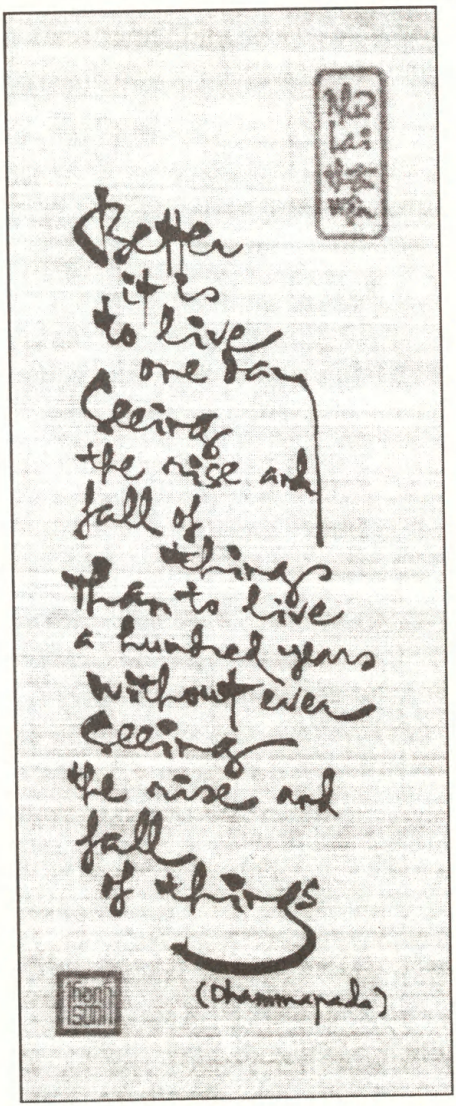
Better
it is
to live
one day
seeing
the rise and
fall of
things
than to live
a hundred years
without ever
seeing
the rise and
fall
of things
(Dhammapada)

III. Dukkha

The five aggregates are called *dukkha,* suffering, because they are constantly oppressed by rise and fall. This is one of three reasons given in the commentaries. The second reason the aggregates are called *dukkha* is because they are the basis of suffering, they are the seeds of suffering. And the third reason is because there are five aggregates there is suffering, and as we ourselves are five aggregates, we suffer.

We suffer a lot because of the five aggregates. We see something we don't want to see, and we suffer. We hear something we don't want to hear, and there is suffering. We don't want to be sad or depressed, but we do get sad and depressed and we suffer. Because of these five aggregates,we have to endure all of these sufferings.

If there were no five aggregates, there would be no suffering. But because we are five aggregates, there will be aging, disease, and death, and so we suffer. We encounter all of this misery simply because of the five aggregates. Therefore they are called *dukkha,* suffering, because they are the basis of suffering. In this sense, the five aggregates of clinging are also called *dukkha.*

The third reason given is that they are called *dukkha* because they are fearsome, they are fearful, they are dreadful. Because of these five aggregates we undergo constant suffering, so they are fearful. Because they bring aging, disease, death, and other kinds of suffering, they are called *dukkha.* We must practice meditation in order to see and